

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 240

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Major General Gary L. Harrell of Johnson City.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Major General Gary L. Harrell; and

WHEREAS, Major General Gary L. Harrell, U.S. Army (Retired) served his nation with the utmost integrity and valor for more than thirty-five years before officially retiring as Deputy Commanding General, United States Army Special Operations Command in July 2008; and

WHEREAS, a native of Jonesborough, Major General Harrell was an ROTC graduate of East Tennessee State University, from which he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Management in 1973; and

WHEREAS, commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in December 1973, Major General Harrell was initially assigned with the 2nd Battalion, 508th Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he served as a rifle platoon leader and anti-tank platoon leader; and

WHEREAS, in January 1977, after completing the Special Forces Qualification Course, he was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Fort Gulick, Panama; and

WHEREAS, Major General Harrell returned to duty with the 82nd Airborne Division in September 1980; he assumed command of Company C, 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry in February 1981 and deployed as a member of the first multinational force to the Sinai Peninsula in the spring of 1981; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, Major General Gary Harrell was deployed to Grenada for Operation Urgent Fury and, in April 1984, was designated as the Operations Officer for the 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Fort Devens, Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, in December 1985, Major General Harrell was assigned to 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (SFOD-D) in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as a troop commander; while in the unit, he participated in Operation Just Cause and his troop performed the first successful hostage rescue by snatching U.S. citizen Kurt Muse, who had been held captive in Modelo Prison by Panamanian General Manuel Noriega's forces, just prior to the commencement of the main U.S. invasion of Panama. Major General Harrell was the only officer to actually enter the Modelo Prison during the rescue operation; and

WHEREAS, in March 1991, Major General Harrell was assigned to the Joint Special Operations Command as Army Special Operations Action Officer, and he participated in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm; and

WHEREAS, Major General Gary Harrell assumed command of C Squadron, 1st SFOD-D in April 1992 and was deployed to Colombia, where he led forces in operations against drug lord Pablo Escobar in support to the government of Colombia; this operation later culminated in Pablo Escobar's death at the hand of Colombian authorities; and

WHEREAS, his next combat deployment was to Somalia in support of United Nations Operation in Somalia II; in Somalia, he served as Ground Force Commander for combat operations, a portion of which was later depicted in the book and subsequent movie titled *Black Hawk Down*; and

WHEREAS, Major General Harrell was severely wounded by enemy mortar fire on October 9, 1993, and was evacuated to the U.S., where he began a long recovery process; and

WHEREAS, his next assignment was as Deputy Commander, SFOD-D (Delta Force) in June 1995; Major General Harrell commanded the 1st SFOD-D from July 1998 to July 2000 and participated in numerous combat operations with Delta Force; and

WHEREAS, in July 2000, he assumed duties as Director, Joint Security Directorate (JSD), U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM); as JSD, he was responsible for all U.S. security operations within the twenty-six country CENTCOM area of operations, one of the most dangerous operational areas in the world; and

WHEREAS, his responsibilities as JSD included the following mission requirements: personal security detail that guarded the CENTCOM Commander, security forces guarding U.S. embassies, security for every American base or outpost, security for every American ship that made a port call in the AOR (Area Of Responsibility), and inspection and updates for every security plan in the AOR; he was also responsible for ensuring that U.S. soldiers and civilians were safe from attack; and

WHEREAS, in response to the attack on the USS *Cole*, he deployed to Aden, Yemen, where he was responsible for all CENTCOM Security Operations and support to the U.S. ambassador to Yemen in the aftermath of the tragic terrorist attack; his actions provided safety for the surviving crewmembers and investigators who arrived to conduct the post-explosion investigation; and

WHEREAS, in October 2001, Major General Harrell formed the USCENTCOM Joint Inter-Agency Task Force (JIATF); this specially formed task force combined the efforts of international and national agencies, including the Secret Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, and NYPD-Interagency Task Force; and

WHEREAS, Major General Gary Harrell deployed the JIATF to Bagram, Afghanistan, as the Commander of Task Force Bowie on November 25, 2001, and served as Assistant Division Commander for the 10th Mountain Division during Operation Anaconda, which was one of the largest military operations ever conducted in the Shai-Khowt Valley, long a Taliban and Al-Qaeda stronghold; and

WHEREAS, in July 2002, Major General Harrell assumed command of Special Operations Command Central. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, he commanded the largest special operations forces assembled since World War II, consisting of over 20,000 personnel; under his command, Special Forces teams were inserted into Iraq prior to the main invasion force and conducted stability operations, which enabled coalition forces to move quickly and effectively when actual combat operations began; and

WHEREAS, in April 2005, he was assigned as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations/Commander, Deployable Joint Task Force, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Response Force in Brunssum, Netherlands, where he was responsible for NATO forces taking operational control over all of Afghanistan; Major General Harrell also led the Deployable Joint Task Force on its first-ever operational deployment to the Cape Verde islands off the West Coast of Africa, where ground, special operations, naval, and air forces honed their combat capabilities; and

WHEREAS, Major General Harrell was a graduate of the Airborne Course, Ranger Course, Special Forces Underwater Operations Course, Military Free Fall Course, Pathfinder School, Military Free Fall Jumpmaster Course, Special Forces Qualification Course, Special Operations Training Course, the Armed Forces Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College; and

WHEREAS, his awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal with V-device and two Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, and Joint Service Achievement Medal, as well as numerous service and campaign medals; he also earned the Combat Infantryman Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Master Military Free Fall Parachutist Badge, Pathfinder Badge, SCUBA Diver Badge, Special Forces Tab, and Ranger Tab; and

WHEREAS, after his retirement from the U.S. Army, Major General Harrell served as Director General for King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC) in Amman, Jordan, from April 2009 to May 2012; the world's most elite military and civilian counter-terrorist operations units have trained at KASOTC; and

WHEREAS, he later served as Vice President of Special Operations Programs for CUBIC Defense Applications and most recently served as the chairman of the Washington County Republican Party; and

WHEREAS, Major General Gary Harrell was deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, left to cherish his memory are his wife, Jennifer Counts Harrell, their children, Andrea H. (Kevin) Burchette, Chad W. (Marcia Barker) Harrell, and Amanda L. (Maj. Nathan T.) Schwamburger; and their grandchildren, Carson Grace Burchette, Callie Faith Burchette, Rory Lynn Harrell, William Finnegan Harrell, Harrell Thomas Schwamburger, and Hadley Cannon Schwamburger; and

WHEREAS, Major General Gary L. Harrell leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant, distinguished veteran, and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Major General Gary L. Harrell (Ret.), reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Major General Harrell.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.